## I. IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims below will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-6. (Cancelled)

Claim 7. (Currently amended) An siRNA having a nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID No. 23 ~~any one of SEQ ID Nos. 20 to 34~~.

Claim 8. (Currently amended) An siRNA having a nucleotide sequence which hybridizes under stringent conditions either with an RNA region of HCV having a sequence complementary to a nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID No. 23 ~~any one of SEQ ID Nos. 20 to 34~~ or an RNA region of HCV hybridizing under stringent conditions with said nucleotide sequence.

Claim 9. (Previously Presented) An siRNA having a nucleotide sequence consisting of 19 to 23 contiguous bases in any one of the nucleotide sequences shown in SEQ ID Nos. 47 to 55.

Claim 10. (Previously Presented) An siRNA having a nucleotide sequence which hybridizes under stringent conditions either with an RNA region of HCV having a sequence complementary to a nucleotide sequence consisting of 19 to 23 contiguous bases in any one of the nucleotide sequences shown in SEQ ID Nos. 47 to 55 or an RNA region of HCV hybridizing under stringent conditions with said nucleotide sequence.

Claim 11. (Previously Presented) A vector which expresses the siRNA according to Claim 7.

Claim 12. (Previously Presented) A therapeutic agent for hepatitis C containing as an active ingredient the siRNA according to Claim 7.

Claim 13. (Cancelled)

Claim 14. (Previously Presented) A vector which expresses the siRNA according to Claim 9.

Claim 15. (Previously Presented) A therapeutic agent for hepatitis C containing as an active ingredient the siRNA according to Claim 9.

Claim 16. (Previously Presented) A therapeutic agent for hepatitis C containing as an active ingredient the vector according to Claim 11.

Claim 17. (Cancelled)

Claim 18. (Currently amended) An siRNA having a nucleotide sequence shown in SEQ ID No. 23 ~~any one of SEQ ID Nos. 20 to 34~~ or a nucleotide sequence consisting of 19 to 23 contiguous bases in any one of nucleotide sequences shown in SEQ ID Nos. 47 to 55, wherein 7 or less nucleotides are deleted, substituted or added, and being able to inhibit HCV replication by hybridizing with the RNA of HCV.